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Forest
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Route To:

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Subject: Monument Canyon Bark Beetle Prevention Thinning

To: Forest Supervisor, Santa Fe National Forest

On May 17, Dave Conklin of our staff met with Bill Armstrong (Santa Fe NF) and Don Falk (University of Arizona) to examine the Monument Canyon Research Natural Area (RNA), a portion of which is scheduled for mechanical thinning later this year. Our supplemental FY 2005 insect and disease prevention/suppression funds will add to existing funds to help implement this project.

Stand conditions here vary from nearly pure ponderosa pine to pine-mixed forest, with significant amounts of Douglas-fir, white fir, and white pine present. (This area may contain the largest concentration of white pine in the Jemez Mountains.) Large yellow pine, some as old as 600 years, dominate the overstory; however, significant proportions of these have died over the past few years as a result of drought, bark beetles, etc. The understory consists mostly of stagnant, 90 year-old trees, with densities easily exceeding 1000 stems/acre in many areas. Ponderosa pine dwarf mistletoe occurs in a scattered distribution throughout, affecting roughly 30 percent of the treatment area.

About 260 acres of this 640 acre tract of largely unmanaged forest would be thinned by contract. The low-thinning, using mastication equipment (where feasible), is expected to reduce densities to under 100 trees/acre. Treatment should greatly increase overall stand vigor, reducing long-term susceptibility to bark beetles. Non-host species (especially white pines) can be favored in many of the dwarf mistletoe infection centers. This area is adjacent to some recently thinned stands and others scheduled for thinning; one overall objective in this area is reduction in fire hazard to protect nearby residential areas. Following thinning, portions of the area are expected to be prescribe-burned. This area has been intensively monitored by University of Arizona scientists since year 2000, and treatment here should provide excellent opportunities for comparison of treated and untreated forest.

/s/ David A. Conklin (for)
DEBRA ALLEN-REID
New Mexico Zone Leader, Forest Health

cc: Debra Allen-Reid, William Armstrong, Leonard Lucero, Dave Cummings

